

Dear Beth Am Family,

When we read Greek and Roman classics, we find great heroes of immense strength and bravery. In these texts, we see individuals who journey great distances, leading their people to wondrous victory and/or attaining amazing feats based on their heroic charisma. We love reading their tales and they provide great drama because of their bravery and works of amazement.

Some of the Jewish heroic tales, written on paper (or parchment) around the same time, have similar qualities. King David used his mighty strength and bravery to defeat the massive Goliath. King Solomon utilized his cunning and wisdom to defeat the surrounding armies that threatened his kingdom. And yet, the most famous of Jewish leaders, Moses, is not always known for his bravery or his strength. In this week's portion, we learn about his most important quality. It is not his brains or his brawn. It is his humility.

Parshat Yitro tells us about when Moses and the people arrive at the base of Mt. Sinai, the people flood Moses with issues. Some people come to him about personal problems while others come to him about civil disputes. They all want to know what to do. While Moses is only one who can give them the answers. In a quiet moment, Moses does not take refuge alone, but rather chooses to seek the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law. Jethro, seeing how burdensome the work had become, tells Moses that this is not good for him or the community. He instructs him to seek help from others. Let them deal with the day-to-day. That will enable him to help the most dire situations. Without missing a beat, without letting his ego get in the way, Moses freely offers up some of his authority, in order to lessen the burden on himself as well as engage more people in the community.

Moses shows a great level of humility. He is not Odysseus or Achilles. He is not afraid to admit he needs help. Rather, he recognizes that there is greater gain for all if he asks others to participate in his goals. So too it is for us. Whether it is our family goals or the goals of the congregation, the more people we bring along, the better we all become. The weight of our goals is too heavy for one or two people to carry. When we open up enough space for others to "come-along for the ride," it allows more people to own the vision. When more people have accepted their place, they become share-holders and care a lot more about what happens to the goals.

May each of us not be afraid, like Moses, to ask for help. May we strive to make enough space for others in our lives to participate in our goals. May we all work to help foster and enrich the goals of each other, working to make our families, our community, and our world a better place.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Robert Weiner